

[Back](#) | [Print](#)

Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request 33

Date of Meeting: January 13, 2004

Date Submitted: January 7, 2004

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board
From: Parwez Alam, County Administrator
Tony Park, P.E., Director of Public Works
Subject: Conduct the First Public Hearing for the Beech Ridge Trail Sewer Utility 2/3 Project

Statement of Issue:

Conduct the first public hearing for a sewer utility 2/3 project for the residential properties on Beech Ridge Trail and adopt a resolution authorizing the special improvements (Attachment #1).

Background:

During its December 9, 2003 meeting the Board of County Commissioners accepted the petition from the Beech Ridge Trail property owners and authorized staff to schedule the first public hearing for January 13, 2004. The Board of County Commissioners also approved the franchise area for sewer service, granting Talquin Electric Cooperative the right to provide the Beech Ridge Trail area with sewer service.

In accordance with Section 18-48 of the Code of Laws of Leon County, the Board will hear all interested persons on the special improvements proposed during this public hearing. The Board may then or thereafter reject the petition or order the special improvements by resolution.

Beech Ridge Trail is a County-maintained street located in Killearn Lakes Unit I, as recorded in Plat Book 6, page 26 of the Public Records of Leon County, Florida. It is the first side street off Kinhega Drive from Thomasville Highway (Attachment #2)

Affected property owners have been notified of the public hearing by certified mail (Attachment #3) and a Public Notice was published in the local paper (Attachment #4).

Analysis:
Petition

The properties represented by this petition are currently located within unincorporated Leon County. The petition has been signed by 8 of the 11 property owners in the subdivision and in the proposed utility area. Staff has reviewed the petition and determined that it meets the requirements of Section 18-47, requiring 2/3 of the property owners to be in support of the petition.

Project History

A 2/3 Sewer Utility Petition is similar to a 2/3 Roadway Petition that the County has used to develop 2/3

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Roadway projects in the past. County Code provides for the Utility Petitions which allow the County to provide water and sewer service to properties in the same way that paved roads have been provided. This is the first utilization of the 2/3 Utility Petition process for a water or sewer project in Leon County.

Originally, several property owners contacted Talquin Electric Cooperative to determine if sewer service could be made available to them. Talquin advised that the only option available at this time would be with a Low Pressure Sewer System with the homeowners providing the grinder pumps necessary for the system to function. A majority of the homeowners accepted that offer and asked Talquin to develop the project. These homeowners also paid to Talquin several thousand dollars for design services associated with the project.

The availability of this sewer service was the result of a recent project by Talquin to extend service to a property on Thomasville Highway. That project included the placement of a sewer manhole at the end of Beech Ridge Trail to which the Low Pressure System can pump. Talquin advises that other forms of sewer service to Beech Ridge Trail, such as gravity mains, may be available but are not financially feasible for the project.

During the development of this project, the County Board discussions and inquiries regarding sewer service for all of Killearn Lakes Units I and II came to the attention of the homeowners. The homeowners investigated and found that the Utility 2/3 Program was available to them. Although the homeowners were prepared to pay the costs of the project in a single payment to Talquin, the potential for County participation and financing of those costs made participation in the County program quite desirable. Accordingly, the petition was processed and is now before the Board for consideration.

Project Costs

The proposed project consists of five components: the collection piping system; the pumping system; the treatment facilities; the connection fees; and the on-site construction at each home:

The collection piping system consists of a 2 inch diameter flexible pipe to be installed along the right of way, with a 2 inch lateral pipe extended to each lot. Talquin has committed to providing the collection piping system at a cost of approximately \$20,000. Talquin has a contract with a local contractor to do this work. It is County staff's opinion that this cost is acceptable, and re-bidding the work through County processes may increase the cost. Accordingly, staff recommends that the County and Talquin Electric enter into a Joint Project Agreement for this project element.

Treatment will be provided by Talquin at their treatment facilities. Talquin's standard fee for this project component is \$3,500 per lot (\$38,500 for all 11 lots), paid before the connection will be allowed. Again, if the County does not pay for the fees, the County will not be able to include this cost in the assessment and financing. It is possible, however, for the County to pay these fees on behalf of the homeowners and include this cost element in the assessment. It is staff's recommendation that these fees be paid by Leon County and assessed to the homeowners.

Connection fees for Talquin are set at \$500 per lot, or \$5,500 for the 11 lots. Depending on how the process works, however, the connection could be installed at the time of construction of the collection piping system and Talquin may be able to forego this charge. Talquin may find it necessary to physically connect each lot to the system and therefore a connection fee may be required. Staff intends to negotiate with Talquin, however, to see if a

reduced or waived connection fee is possible in this circumstance. If the fees are required, it is recommended that the County pay these fees on behalf of the homeowners and include this cost element in the assessment.

Costs to Lot Owners to Access Sewer System. The following costs will be paid by the lot owners independently of the 2/3 Project.

The pumping system consists of a prefabricated assembly that includes a chamber in which sewer flows will accumulate and a pump that will grind the sewer so that it can be pumped into the 2 inch sewer main. The grinder pump systems are currently proposed to be provided by the lot owners at a cost of approximately \$3,500 per lot. This cost will only occur at the time that the lot owner is ready to connect to the sewer system and therefore is not part of the project cost.

On-site construction at each home consists of the activities that the homeowner must accomplish to allow their connection to the collection piping system. These include:

- Retain a plumber to install the grinder pump station and connect the household system
- Retain an electrician to provide electric power to the grinder pump station
- Retain a septic tank contractor to abandon any existing septic tanks
- Insure that permits are obtained for all of this work

The cost of these activities could range from less than \$500 to \$2,000 or more, depending on the unique circumstances at each home. It is highly unlikely that the County will be able to assist the homeowners with these costs since they will vary greatly among the homeowners and all of the work must be performed on private property.

The following table summarizes the costs of the project and the projected or anticipated assessment for 11 lots based upon the components described above. Also presented in this table are the total project costs that the homeowners will be facing.

Cost Element	Anticipated total cost to lot owner to connect to the system	Projected Assessable Amount
Collection Piping	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000
Pumping System	38,500	0
Treatment (Fees)	38,500	38,500
Connection Fees	5,500	5,500
On-site Costs	11,000	0
Total	\$113,500	\$ 64,000
Cost per Lot	\$10,318	\$5,818

Comprehensive Sewer System for Killearn Lakes Units I and II

It is inevitable that a comprehensive sewer system will be constructed to serve the homes in Killearn Lakes Units I and II and possibly Unit IV. As a part of that project, isolated low pressure systems such as this one that exist at the time of that project development will be re-assessed. It is probable that these homes can be provided with more reliable and less costly systems as a part of that larger project. If this should be the case, the homeowners would be given the opportunity to join the new and larger project. That participation may result in the Beech Ridge Trail homeowners having to pay for their share of the new system. They would not, however, have to pay System Fees again. The homeowners will have the opportunity to make that decision when the comprehensive sewer system develops.

Summary

The Beech Ridge Trail project has been requested by a majority of the homeowners who are intent upon providing themselves with sewer service of better quality and reliability than what can be provided by a septic system. The homeowners petitioning for this project understand the costs and their obligations with regard to pump operation and maintenance and determined that they are acceptable.

There may be 2 or 3 homeowners on Beech Ridge Trail that believe that this system is unacceptable or unnecessary to them. Those homeowners will be required to share in the cost of this project by virtue of the 2/3 Program and the fact that their properties will be benefitted as a result of having access to the sewer system. Importantly, if those homeowners' septic systems should fail, they will be required to connect to the system as approved by the County.

In accordance with County Code, upon completion of the project, a second public hearing will be held to determine the amount of the assessment and to impose liens on those benefitted lots.

Options:

1. Conduct the First Public Hearing for the Beech Ridge Trail Sewer Utility 2/3 Project.
2. Adopt resolution authorizing special improvements.
3. Board direction.

Recommendation:

Options #1 and #2.

Attachments:

1. Copy of Resolution
2. Location map
3. Copy of letter to owners
4. Copy of published notice

[Back](#)[Print](#)